

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
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FM AMEMBASSY DACCA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5055
INFO AMCONSUL CALCUTTA
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
CINCPAC HONOLULU

C O N F I D E N T I A L DACCA 3250

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PORG, BG, UK
SUBJECT: ZIA RETURNS FROM COMMONWEALTH CONFERENCE

REF: NEW DELHI 8422

1. PRESIDENT ZIA RETURNED TO DACCA JUNE 14 FROM THE COMMONWEALTH HEADS OF GOVERNMENT CONFERENCE IN LONDON. HE TOLD REPORTERS AT AN AIRPORT PRESS CONFERENCE THAT HE HAD MADE MANY FIRENDS FROM BANGLADESH AND HAD HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO EXPLAIN BANGLADESH'S NEEDS TO MOST OF THE COMMONWEALTH LEADERS. COMMENTING ON HIS THREE MEETINGS WITH INDIAN PRIME MINISTER MORARJI DESAI, ZIA SAID THAT HE WAS GLAD THAT INDIA NOW "HAS A MUCH BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF OUR PROBLEMS." HE ADDED THAT HIS MEETINGS WITH DESAI HAD GIVEN HIM HOPE THAT BANGLADESH-INDIAN BILATERAL PROBLEMS COULD BE SOLVED AND HE ANNOUNCED THAT A TECHNICAL LEVEL INDIAN DELEGATION WOULD BE IN DACCA BY THE END OF JUNE TO DISCUSS THE FARAKKA ISSUE. ZIA EMPHASIZED ALSO THAT HE HAD HAD "FRUITFUL" DISCUSSIONS WITH CANADIAN PRIME MINSITER TURDEAU AND AUSTRALIAN PRIME MINISTER FRASER
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ON THE SUBJECT OF INCREASED FOOD AID TO BANGLADESH.

2. WE CANNOT EVALUATE ZIA'S SUBSTANTIVE CONTRIBUTION TO THE CONFERENCE, ALTHOUGH THE LOCAL PRESS HEADLINED HIS PRESENTATION OF A FIVE-POINT FORMULAR TO FACILITATE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. THE FORMULA WAS A FAMILIAR CALL TO DEVELOPED COUNTRIES TO INCREASE THEIR AID WHILE

CANCELLING OR RESCHEDULING LDC DEBT REPAYMENTS. ZIA'S OTHER SPECIFIC PROPOSALS INCLUDED A CALL FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A COMMONWEALTH FUND FOR INDUSTRIAL COOPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT AND A SUGGESTION TO GET UP ONE OR MORE CENTERS WITHIN THE COMMONWEALTH FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A TECHNOLOGY APPROPRIATE TO BASIC ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

3. COMMENT: OF MORE IMPORTANCE THAN HIS PROPOSALS, ZIA'S PARTICIPATION IN THE CONFERENCE GAVE HIM HIS FIRST OPPORTUNITY SINCE BECOMING PRESIDENT TO ENHANCE HIS CREDENTIALS AS A STATESMAN IN THE EYES OF THE BANGLADESH PUBLIC. THE BANGLADESH PRESS HEAVILY PUBLICIZED ZIA'S ACTIVITIES IN LONDON, CARRYING PICTURES OF HIS MEETINGS WITH COMMONWEALTH LEADERS AND REPRINTING HIS REMARKS IN A BBC-TV INTERVIEW THAT HE WOULD NOT RPT NOT FORM A POLITICAL PARTY IN BANGLADESH.

4. NWO THAT THE CONFERENCE IS BEHIND HIM, ZIA CAN GET ON WITH THE JOB OF GOVERNING BANGLADESH. HE MAY USE THE COMING WEEKS TO ANNOUNCE NEW INITIATIVES TO IMPLEMENT HIS 19-POINT PROGRAM, THE CORNERSTONE OF HIS REFERENDUM. RUMORS OF CHANGES AMONG ZIA'S SENIOR ADVISORS CONTINUE TO CIRCULATE.
MASTERS

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